

REMARKS

Claims 29, 38 and 39 have been canceled. Claims 53-58 stand withdrawn as being directed to a non-elected invention. Claim 33 has been amended to correct a typographical error. No other amendments to the claims or specification have been made. Accordingly, claims 26-28, 31-37, and 40-44 are presented for examination.

The present action substantially reiterates the prior art rejections from prior Office Action dated June 3, 2005. In response to the arguments filed in our prior Amendment and Reply dated November 28, 2005 relating to the removal of the Suga reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,297,908) as prior art based on the German priority document for the present application, the Examiner states that he cannot find any English translations of any German priority documents.

Upon reviewing the file, we conclude that the copy of the English translation of the German priority document referred to in our prior reply was inadvertently omitted from the November 28, 2005 filing enclosing our prior Reply. As a result, we substantially reiterate the prior argument from that Reply below and affirmatively enclose a copy of the German translation of the German priority document.

Independent claims 26 and 43 stand rejected as allegedly obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,211,463 ("Kalmanash") in view of Suga reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,297,908). We do not concede the merits of this rejection. However, as explained in further detail below, Suga is not prior art to the present application. Therefore, we ask the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 26 and 43.

Specifically, the U.S. filing date for Suga is June 2, 1999. On the other hand, the present application claims priority to German Patent Applications 198 60 696.6, 198 60 697.4, and 198 60 695.8, all filed on December 29, 1998, *before* Suga's filing date. See § MPEP 2136.03(I). We note that the present action acknowledges this priority claim. Therefore, the present application is entitled to priority date of December 29, 1998 for subject matter disclosed in the German Patent Applications. We enclose an English translation of German Patent Application 198 60 696.6, which provides support for all of the claims currently under examination. For example, see the Table below indicating where support for each claim can be found in the

English translation of the priority document. Accordingly, we ask the Examiner to withdraw the prior art rejection.

| Claim | Support |
|-------|---|
| 26 | for example, supported at pages 5-7 and Figures 1-2, e.g., including light waveguide (1), light exit face (1A), light entry faces (5B), a surface lying opposite the light exit face (1B), lateral surfaces (1C, 1D, 1E and 1F), reflectors (4), light-scattering sections (6), and plane sections (7) |
| 27 | for example, supported at page 5, paragraph 5, e.g., light infeed unit (5) includes "an opening 5B for the allocated reflector 4 and a light source 5A" that is "positioned such that the beam of light is radiated into the optical waveguide 1 at a certain oblique angle" |
| 28 | for example, supported at page 6, paragraph 2, e.g., for each light coupling unit, the optical waveguide "has a triangular projection" for which "one side surface of this projection is covered by a reflector 4, while the other side surfaces lies exposed to the outside, thus forming the opening area 5B" |
| 31 | for example, supported at page 6, paragraph 4, and Figure 2, e.g., where reflectors 4 "are preferably formed as a single unit" |
| 32 | for example, supported at page 6, paragraph 4, e.g., where reflectors 4 are "produced via injection molding" |
| 33 | for example, supported at page 6, paragraph 4, e.g., where reflectors 4 are "produced ... from Pocan® (thermal polyester with a polybutylene terephthalate base)" |
| 34 | for example, supported at page 6, paragraph 4, e.g., where reflectors 4 are "produced ... from Pocan® (thermal polyester with a polybutylene terephthalate base)" |
| 35 | for example, supported at page 6, paragraph 4, e.g., reflectors 4 are formed from a Pocan® material that "is white and forms an ideal diffuse reflector", or from "a foil material ... applied as a reflector" |
| 36 | for example, supported at page 6, paragraph 4, e.g., reflectors 4 can be formed from "a foil with a polycarbonate base" |

| | |
|----|---|
| 37 | for example, supported at page 8, paragraph 2, and Figure 3, e.g., where "openings 25B in the reflective layer 24 and their allocated light sources 25A form a multitude of light coupling units 25" |
| 40 | for example, supported at page 6, paragraph 4, e.g., reflectors 4 can be formed from "a foil ... that is coated or printed with the color white" |
| 41 | for example, supported at page 10, paragraph 3, and Figure 5, e.g., where optical waveguide 40 is a "closed ring [that] can have any shape" |
| 42 | for example, supported at page 5, paragraph 5, e.g., where light source 5A can be "a semiconducting light-emitting diode" |
| 43 | for example, supported at pages 5-7 and Figures 1-2, e.g., see claim 26 above, and further including liquid crystal element 9, which is "positioned above the optical outlet surface 1A of the optical waveguide 1 and ... separated from it by means of spacers" (page 7, paragraph 3) |
| 44 | for example, supported at page 7, paragraph 3, e.g., where liquid crystal element 9 is spaced from optical outlet surface 1A "by means of spacers" |

In view of the above, we ask that the application be allowed.

Canceled claims have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Any circumstance in which the applicant has (a) addressed certain comments of the Examiner does not mean that the applicant concedes other comments of the Examiner, (b) made arguments for the patentability of some claims does not mean that there are not other good reasons for patentability of those claims and other claims, or (c) amended or canceled a claim does not mean that the applicant concedes any of the Examiner's positions with respect to that claim or other claims.

Applicant : Franz Schellhorn et al.
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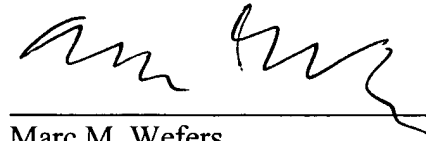
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Respectfully submitted,

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